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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 29 FEBRUARY 1996 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON AND TO THE HEAD OF STATE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

The members of the Security Council have asked me to write to you and to the President of Cameroon to express their concern about recent developments in the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria regarding the Bakassi peninsula, taking note of the letter from the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cameroon of 22 February 1996 (S/1996/125) and the letter from the Foreign Minister of Nigeria of 26 February 1996 (S/1996/140).

The members of the Council deplore the resumption since 3 February 1996 of fighting between Nigeria and Cameroon in this area. This conflict threatens regional peace and stability. The members of the Council regret the loss of life and destruction suffered by civilians living in the Bakassi peninsula. The members of the Council remind your Government and the Government of Cameroon of the requirement of the Charter of the United Nations that all States shall settle their disputes by peaceful means.

The members of the Council have noted that this dispute has already been referred to the International Court of Justice and the case is pending before the Court. The resumption of fighting, therefore, also threatens respect for peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms. Neither side should take any unilateral action, particularly the use of force, to complicate the dispute settlement process. The members of the Council urge you to redouble your efforts to reach a peaceful settlement through the International Court of Justice. The Council members also welcome bilateral and regional efforts undertaken to assist such a peaceful resolution of the dispute.

The members of the Security Council call upon the parties to respect the cease-fire they agreed to on 17 February in Kara, Togo, and to refrain from further violence. They further call upon the parties to take necessary steps to return their forces to the positions they occupied before the dispute was referred to the International Court.

The members of the Security Council welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to the parties that he should send a fact-finding mission to the Bakassi peninsula and urge your Government to cooperate fully with this mission. They have requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to continue to monitor this matter closely and to report to the Council on the results of the fact-finding mission and any other significant developments.

(Signed) Madeleine Korbel ALBRIGHT
President of the Security Council